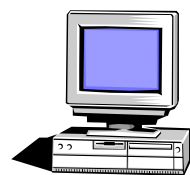


Statewide Planning Program  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908  
www.planning.ri.gov



## WEB SITE UPDATE

(<http://www.planning.ri.gov>)

Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of Transportation Improvement Plan Amendments.
- posting of public hearing notices
- electronic filing of committee agenda's and minutes with the secretary of state's office.
- posting of city/town approved affordable housing plans.
- posting of city and town amendments to their comprehensive plans.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, and Transportation Advisory Committee's calendar and agendas.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website and graphics room—aerial photographs contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, [kimgo@lori.state.ri.us](mailto:kimgo@lori.state.ri.us)

## Graphics Room—Aerial Photos

Graphic assistance was provided to the Atrium Gallery. Technical assistance was provided to other agencies within DOA.

45 aerial photographs were loaned to cities, towns, other state government agencies and the private sector.

Staff also assisted with inquires regarding photographic and digital aerals.

# Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

One Capitol Hill, Providence, RI 02908  
401-222-7901 [www.planning.state.ri.us](http://www.planning.state.ri.us)



Janaury - March 2006  
Number 418

## Quarterly Progress Report

### State Planning Council Set to Adopt Land Use 2025 Rhode Island's State Land Use Policies and Plan

The State Planning Council, on January 12<sup>th</sup>, approved the draft of the new state land use plan for public hearing, culminating years of research and preparatory work by the Statewide Planning staff, under the direction of the Technical Committee. Four public workshops and public hearings were held – on February 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup> and the public comment period ended on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Both the draft text and maps have been revised based upon the input from both the Council and the public. On April 13<sup>th</sup> the State Planning Council is expected to formally adopt the first update of this element in over fifteen years. See *Land Use 2025* online at: [www.planning.ri.gov](http://www.planning.ri.gov)

#### **Purpose of the Plan**

*Land Use 2025* is Rhode Island's State plan for conservation and development in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the major connective State Guide Plan element with policies, goals, objectives and strategies to coordinate municipal and state agency land use plans, regulations and projects. The plan is also the context and companion State Guide Plan to the new State Five Year Strategic Housing Plan (scheduled for public hearing April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>). Maps contained in *Land Use 2025* identify areas appropriate for both resource protection and development. Moreover, this update represents the first State land use plan prepared since the adoption of local comprehensive plans in response to the enactment of the *Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act* in 1988.

#### **New Approach – 3<sup>rd</sup> State Land Use Plan in 30 years**

Activated by the urgency to plan more intelligently and to develop and conserve smarter, the new plan recognizes State's changing role within the dynamic Northeast corridor while also acknowledging the importance of preserving and enhancing the qualities that make Rhode Island unique. The plan has an ambitious implementation section with 25 objectives, 90 strategies, and interagency team assignments.

With adoption of the plan, the State Planning Council accepts a prominent leadership role, orchestrating better statewide land use planning and managing the plan's implementation. The plan also advocates for significantly improved capacity in public and citizen planning and excellent statewide land use information and technology.

Major Concepts

Urban –Rural Distinction and an Urban Services Boundary.

The plan urges state agencies and municipalities to pursue significantly different land use and development approaches for urban and rural areas in order to maintain the distinction between the historic urban centers and neighborhoods and their rural natural surrounding areas. This is manifested by the identification of an **Urban Services Boundary** that is the single most noteworthy aspect of the plan. This boundary delineation was based upon land capability and suitability analysis that demonstrates the capacity of these areas to accommodate future growth. The new plan directs the state and communities to concentrate growth inside the Urban Services Boundary and within locally designated centers in rural areas.

Statewide Systems of Greenspace, Community Design and Infrastructure

*Land Use 2025* promotes a regional systems approach through stronger, interconnected, statewide systems of greenspace and natural resources, public highway and utility infrastructure and also a network of well-designed communities made of centers of various sizes and types, neighborhoods and special places.

Areas of Special Concern

Areas under high development pressure, deserving of special scrutiny and priority assistance in land use planning and regulations are recognized. Arguably the most valuable land assets in R.I. and certain to be target of increasing development pressures, these areas include underutilized urban areas, highway

interchanges, and the entire saltwater and freshwater shoreline.

Redevelopment and Higher Densities

In concert with the new State Statagic Housing Plan, *Land Use 2025* emphasized the critical importance of redeveloping and revitalizing centers and neighborhoods through concentrating and mixing land uses. The Plan focuses multiple strategies on achieving higher building densities and more dynamic centers and special places.

Key Recommendations of Land Use 2025:

- Permanent Greenspace throughout the rural, urban and the waterfront areas
- Development concentrated in well-designed centers, neighborhoods and special district, special places
- A diverse and affordable housing stock
- Public infrastructure maximized and coordinated with development
- Reform of the property tax system
- Excellent land use information and technology systems
- Upgrade capacity of public and citizen planners

On May 12<sup>th</sup>, Grow Smart Rhode Island will convene hundreds of citizens at Rhode Island 2025: The Power of Place summit to help begin the implementation of the land use plan.

Economic Development

The “Year in Providence” series at New Commons continued this quarter with two sessions, with participation from Statewide Planning. Each of these brought together more than 30 people from government, the private sector (including the prominent developer Streuver Brothers, Eccles and Rouse), and the arts community. Keynote speakers emphasized the advantages of Providence in terms of size and scale, and the opportunities these presented for innovation, cooperation among entrepreneurs, and the development of human capital, all with the potential of real wealth creation. It was suggested that Providence is actually ahead of most of its competition in New England, e.g., Worcester and cities in Connecticut, in realizing that potential. Affordable housing was explored as a critical concern, however, as well as the loss of urban industrial property to high-end residences. The series continues in April, under facilitator Robert Leaver’s rubric of “better thinking, better linking, and better doing.”

The staff also participated in a workshop on disaster management and business continuity sponsored by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce, many of whose members suffered from flooding caused by

excessive rains last October. Larry Quick of New Commons was the facilitator, and representatives of the R.I. Emergency Management Agency, Massachusetts EMA, and the National Weather Service attended along with local business people.

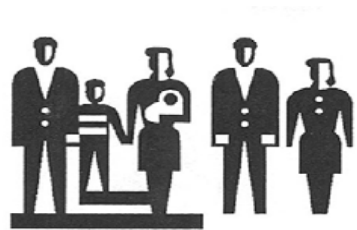
The project solicitation for this year’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) was initiated on March 14 with a letter to more than 110 potential applicants from city and town governments, public agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofit development organizations. Recipients were asked to express an interest, and those who did received this year’s application package. The applications, with their project narratives, are due May 5. A CEDS workshop is

Review of EDC projects	
3	proposals received this quarter
1	pending from last quarter
2	completed
2	pending

Intergovernmental Review	
17	proposals received this quarter
17	completed

Land Use

# RI Census



## Comprehensive Plans

The first quarter of calendar year 2006 saw the State approval of the Town of Foster's Affordable Housing Plan (AHP) and the Town of Narragansett's Five-Year Update (5YU). The approval of Foster's AHP signified that all of the 29 municipalities required to prepare an AHP had successfully put one in place.

An amendment to the Town of North Kingstown Comprehensive Plan (NK 05-2) and revisions to the Town of Foster's Five-Year Update (FOS 5YU-04) were accepted for State review. The Comprehensive Plans Section's review of NK 05-2 was drafted and submitted.

Principal Planner Derry Riding once again began her critical role of monitoring proposed State legislation on behalf of the Division of Planning.

Derry continued to represent the Statewide Planning Program in the cooperative endeavor with GrowSmart Rhode Island to both present and modify as necessary training programs for local government officials. She also served on the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association Subcommittee studying the issue of eminent domain.

Together with Senior Planner Paul Gonsalves, Derry formed part of a group effort to update the Inclusionary Zoning Handbook to assist local communities in implementing their AHPs.

Paul served on a panel that reviewed and made recommendations regarding 20 Transportation Challenge Grant and 3 Corridor Study funding

applications. He also continued to refine the system of "scanning" local newspapers for articles of interest to Division of Planning staff members.

Meetings/communications were held with local planning officials from the following government entities: Charlestown - met with their Town Planner and planning consultant to ascertain the acceptability of their approach to drafting the Town's 5YU; Hopkinton - met with their Town Planner to discuss growth management techniques; the Narragansett Indian Tribe - communications seeking to verify to what extent the Tribe had completed its Comprehensive Plan; Smithfield - communications with the Town Planner's Office regarding the possible consequences of the Town Council's denial of a rezoning request necessary for a proposed affordable housing development; Westerly - communications with the Town Planner regarding the Town's proposed two-phased Five-Year Update and the need for an evaluation of "Recommended Actions" listed in their current Comprehensive Plan; and West Warwick - communications with the Town Planner regarding the requirement that if a proposed zoning amendments is not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the Town must adopt an appropriate Comprehensive Plan amendment prior to the adoption of the proposed zoning amendment.

As always, a wide-range of technical assistance was provided to local government officials, other State agencies, consultants, non-profit organizations, and the general public.

Congratulations to John O'Brien, Chief of the Statewide Planning Program, for "his sustained and distinguished contributions in the field of planning" and to Nancy Hess, Principal Environmental Planner, for her contribution in drafting the Forest Resource Management Plan component of the State Guide Plan. Both were recognized by receiving Awards from the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Planning Association at the Chapter's Holiday Party.

# Committee Actions

## STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in January, and March. They received a briefing on amendments 1 and 1A to the Transportation Improvement Program. These amendments were the result of new "earmark" projects that must be included in the TIP as well as funding reductions. The Council accepted Land Use 2025: State Land Use Policies and Plan – State Guide Plan Element 121 for public hearings. Those hearings were scheduled for February and March. Council action on the plan is anticipated for April. The Council also accepted the Five Year Strategic Housing Plan – State Guide Plan element 423 for public hearings. Those hearings have been scheduled for April.

## TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in January, February and March. Acting in the capacity of the Council's advisory committee on the update of the land use element, the Committee took its final action on the plan by recommending it to the State Planning Council for public hearings. The Committee also took action on the Five Year Strategic Housing Plan by recommending it to the Council for hearings. The Committee began its review of the update to the Solid Waste Management element of the State Guide Plan. A briefing on the South County Rail Transit Oriented Development Study was also provided for the Committee.

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The *Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)* met on November 17, 2005. The TAC took the following actions:

After the public hearing, the TAC recommended that the State Planning Council approve the TIP Amendment for the new earmark projects listed in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), with the understanding that the RI Department of Transportation has some flexibility in adjusting project schedules to reflect actual funding available and project readiness.



# Transportation

.